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Downtown protest turns violent

Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News

A man at a rally in downtown Buffalo to protest police brutality confronts State Police officers in riot gear in Niagara Square on Saturday.

STATE OF EMERGENCY IS DECLARED

Vandalism reported after peaceful start

By Dale Anderson
Maki Becker
and Mark Sommer

NEWS STAFF REPORTERS

Demonstrators joining in nationwide protests against police brutality occupied Niagara Square late Saturday afternoon and staged a confrontation with armed U.S. Marshals and Buffalo police in riot gear at the entrance to the federal courthouse before spreading to other neighborhoods late into the night.

Several hundred from the diverse crowd of demonstrators, some of the nearly 1,500 who had been expressing anger at the death of a black man at the hands of a white police officer in Minneapolis, began filing en masse up Niagara Street after police ordered them to leave Niagara Square at 8:30 p.m.

Many in the crowd in front of the courthouse chanted "I can't breathe" and "I'm gonna die," the last words George Floyd said before he died as a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck.

Two hours later, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz declared a state of emergency and implemented a 10:30 p.m. curfew after reports of smashed windows and other vandalism in neighborhoods throughout the city.

Despite the curfew, a stream of demonstrators returned to Niagara Square after 10:30 p.m., where a mobile bail bond truck was burned, police fired tear gas and vandals sprayed graffiti on City Hall.

Shortly before 11:30 p.m., a TV news broadcast showed a man throwing a flaming object through a window of City Hall. Flames visible inside the building were quickly extinguished.

Mayor Byron W. Brown blamed the violence on outside agitators.

"This was incited by people who don't live in this community,"

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Widespread appeals for calm fall on deaf ears

Sprawling, violent protests threaten to spiral out of control nationwide

By John Eligon,
Matt Furber and
Campbell Robertson

NEW YORK TIMES

MINNEAPOLIS – The nation woke on Saturday to extraordinary images of chaos and unrest from outside the White House gates to the streets of more than two dozen besieged cities, as outrage over the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis traversed a razor's edge between protest and civic meltdown.

As state and local leaders braced for more protests over the weekend in cities around the country, they called for calm and vowed to react strongly to protesters who defied the law.

Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota said on Saturday that he was activating thousands of National Guard troops – up to 13,200 – to control protesters in Minneapolis who turned out in droves for the fourth consecutive night Friday, burning buildings to the ground, firing guns near the police and overwhelming officers. But he declined the Army's offer to deploy active-duty military police units.

Rallies, looting and unrest expanded far beyond Minneapolis, with protesters destroying police vehicles in Atlanta and New York and blocking major streets in Detroit and in San Jose, Calif. Crowds in Milwaukee chanted, "I can't breathe"; and demonstrators in Portland, Ore., lit a fire inside the Multnomah County Justice Center. Hundreds of demonstrators poured into the streets near Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, smashing windows, clashing with police officers

See **Protests** on Page A4

Latest coverage at BuffaloNews.com:

Get the latest coverage of the protests, plus photos and video from the scene Saturday evening in downtown Buffalo, on BuffaloNews.com.

40,000 kids left behind

Online learning during pandemic shows a large amount of WNY students are without a computer or high-speed internet

By Jay Rey and Caitlin Dewey

NEWS STAFF REPORTERS

From the rural Southern Tier to the shores of Lake Ontario, nearly 40,000 children across Western New York live in a household without either a computer or high-speed internet.

That's enough to fill KeyBank Center – twice.

The number, based on the most recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, underscores the fundamental problem with teaching students from home since schools moved instruction online during the Covid-19 pandemic: digital access.

It also shows how much work falls on schools to bridge the digital divide and prevent students from falling behind, especially if districts are forced to continue remote instruction come fall.

"That's a big, big concern," said Bret Apthorpe, superintendent of Jamestown Public Schools.

"Part of reopening schools is requiring teachers and families to be prepared to be sent home again this fall in the event of a second wave of the pandemic," Apthorpe said. "We got a pass as educators this first time, because there was no

See **Students** on Page A10

New state rule is limiting regional say on reopening

By Caitlin Dewey

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Western New York's regional "control room" meets by phone for as long as an hour each day, opening with a briefing from Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul before officials trade local updates, case numbers and complaints.

The group, composed of 12 members from five Western New York counties, is officially tasked with "monitoring" and "adjusting" the region's phased reopening plans. In its 156-page reopening guide, released May 15, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration described the regional control rooms as important "oversight institutions," with the power to "slow or shut off reopening if indicators are problematic."

But the governor's surprise announcement Thursday that each of the state's 10 regions would have to clear an extra hurdle before entering the plan's second phase exposed a

See **Reopening** on Page A13

SUPPORTING WESTERN NEW YORK BUSINESSES

The Buffalo News is launching a $1 million matching grant program called We're Open, Western New York. For details, see Publisher Tom Wiley's note, *Page C1.*

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